

## Army Leaders -

Historically, the summer coincides with a rise in hazards for our Soldiers like water-related accidents and motor vehicle fatalities. During these months, we also see a rise in suicides across the force. Every death in our Army is a tragedy, and leader intervention makes a difference.

Although most Soldiers successfully apply coping strategies, we still experience stressors that can escalate into crisis. The summer months are especially challenging because this is a period of significant transition: PCS, leader absences, and lost connections with battle buddies and units. We must identify and implement ways to stay connected throughout these transitions, and we must get immediate help to those who exhibit early warning signs.

I need you, our Army leaders, to reinforce the vital role every Soldier contributes to our team. As leaders, we must redouble efforts to identify and assist our Soldiers, with the resources they need. I encourage you to emphasize the following:

- \* Every Soldier is a valued member of a team and is required for mission accomplishment.
- \* As battle buddies, we all have a duty and obligation to build connections, build trust, and take action when issues arise to assist Soldiers before they reach a crisis.
- \* Suicide is complex - there is seldom a single cause; Soldiers may exhibit many stressors via warning signs like depression, anxiety, drastic mood changes, angry outbursts, recklessness, withdrawal, and hopelessness.

Stay vigilant and know the urgent warning signs of suicide that include: talking about it, giving away possessions, researching a way to die by suicide, and actually saying goodbye, in person or on social media.

I encourage you to promote strong Soldier attributes: social cohesion, clear identity/purpose, a sense of being a valued teammate in a culture of trust, clear goals, and good health (sleep, activity and nutrition).

Share information regarding Army, local and national resources, such as the Military Crisis Hotline, 1-800-273-8255 (TALK), as additional resources for Soldier support.

We share an inherent responsibility to know and care for our Soldiers and their Families. Readiness and resilience are critical to our Army's ability to accomplish our missions. Decisive leadership – including suicide prevention – is our sacred duty to America's sons and daughters. Thank you for your service and all you do for our Army and Nation.

Army Strong!

**- Gen. Dan Allyn, 35th Vice Chief of Staff of the Army**